

# Argus Orthopaedic Zone

## Ankle Sprain

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### *Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

An ankle sprain is one of the most common injuries in both children and adults. Hardly a week goes by that I don't see one or two in the office.

O.K., I can see you rolling your eyes and thinking this will be really boring. Everybody knows about or has had a sprained ankle, right? But, I am sure there are some things you don't know.....so read on please.

#### **What Is It?**

One minute you're fine and the next you tripped or stepped onto an uneven surface. Wham! Pain and you can hardly put any weight on your foot. It feels like it won't hold you up. Say hello to a sprained ankle! You can only hope you didn't break it.

Ankle sprains range from a minor stretch with momentary pain to a very serious injury that tears multiple ligaments that needs my evaluation and treatment.

#### **Signs and Symptoms**

- Sudden pain on the outer aspect of the ankle
- Popping may be heard
- You have trouble moving your ankle and foot
- Painful to bear weight
- Swelling begins
- Bruise appears later that day or the next

#### **Standard Treatment**

Some people tough it out. Others go to the Emergency Room where they spend 4 hours or more (fuming). They are briefly examined, an x-ray is taken, the nurse comes back saying the x-ray is "negative". She quickly wraps your ankle in an Ace bandage and puts you in a wheel chair so you can leave and says "call your doctor in 72 hours if you still hurt." Sigh.

Well, at least the x-ray ruled out a fracture so I guess there is some good to it.

#### **Best Treatment**

If your sprain is minor you will probably get better with no treatment at all. If you have a more serious sprain proper evaluation and treatment are important.

- The foot and ankle should be thoroughly examined.

- Plain x-rays of the foot and ankle are taken.
- Crutches and restricted weight bearing.
- Immobilization - ideally a splint to limit motion.
- Ice, elevation.
- Follow up evaluation in 2 - 3 days.
- For grade 2 and 3 sprains (more severe) I often prescribe an air cast walking brace.
- I don't use the plastic stirrup device very much.
- Stress x-ray exam when comfortable enough to rule out major ankle ligament damage.
- Motrin or Advil for pain and inflammation.

#### **What Else?**

We are out of time and I'm only in the middle of ankle sprains.

"High Ankle sprain"

Hidden fracture

Children's ankle "sprains"

Length of treatment

Rehabilitation

Surgery

Recurrent ankle sprains

And you thought it was all over after the 4 plus hours in the ER and the ace bandage from the nurse!

Hope to see you next week.

#### **Office Website and Argus Orthopaedic Zone Archive**

For much more musculoskeletal and Orthopaedic Surgery information check out the office website [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com) which also takes you to Your Orthopaedic Connection. It contains a huge amount of useful information.

In addition the website has the archive of every article I have written for you in Shepherd Argus. All the articles are listed from most recent back to the first one! Check it out for interesting articles you may have missed.

I appreciate you loyal readers and welcome all newcomers!

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush